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FILE ONLY

Ex-agent sees CIA as ultimate threat

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CEDAR FALLS—John Stockwell would not have left the CIA seven years ago had he believed it was doing something "dirty but necessary" to protect national security.

Thirteen years in the CIA, however, proved to Stockwell that just the opposite was true.

The Central Intelligence Agency, he claims, actually seeks to increase global tensions by supporting military dictatorships and "picking fights" in the Third World. The CIA, he believes, poses the ultimate threat to democracy, and is a major cause of the world's move toward nuclear holocaust.

STOCKWELL GAVE a firsthand account of his CIA career and what he considers the "dirty tricks" engaged in by the agency, during a speech Thursday night at the University of Northern Iowa.

"Not a rebel by nature," Stockwell said, he decided to rebel against the CIA because it is an organization that "scares me to death."

The country's security forces, Stockwell said, "compulsively get us into a war every 10 years."

Our country's covert actions, he said, have killed at least a million people in the 35 years since the CIA was established.

"And they were all communists, obviously, right?" said Stockwell. "Wrong."

Very few of these "direct victims" of U.S. covert actions were communists.

"VIRTUALLY NONE were Russians or KGB," he said. "These were people in the Third World who had the misfortune to live in an area the CIA decided to destabilize."



Stockwell

The people killed in Nicaragua, he added, are not communists, just those unfortunate to live in the northern wastelands of Nicaragua.

The CIA, according to Stockwell, has run destabilization programs and covert operations in countries around the world, including China, Guatemala, Iran, Cuba and Vietnam.

Destabilization, he explained, means the CIA causes a country's society, economy and government structure to fall apart. Leaders are overthrown and replaced by others of our government's choice.

"It is not a nice thing to do," he said. "You go in, assassinate leaders, blow up schools and bridges. You make life miserable."

DESTABILIZATION programs are never aimed at strong countries, Stockwell noted.

"We have never had a destabilization program against the U.S.S.R. since 1950," he said.

Though the victims of the destabilization programs may not be able to strike back, he said, they are aware their country is being torn apart. There is plenty of evidence, according to Stockwell.

During the five-year "secret" bombing of Cambodia, he pointed out, "there was no doubt in (Cambodians') minds that they were being bombed."

The secrecy was that the American people did not know about it."

The Cambodian people "squawked" about the bombing, Stockwell said. But the American government said the idea was ridiculous.

What is ridiculous, according to Stockwell, is how "we break our arms trying to pat ourselves on our backs for being so nice" when we are actually guilty of torturing and killing people as well.

HE URGED people to "remember when you hear Reagan rant and rave about terrorism in the Middle East, that the CIA has been doing this for 35 years."

For 26 years in Latin America, he said, the CIA trained police forces how to control people by making them talk through torture.

"How do you teach torture?" he asked. "You have to get your hands dirty."

Beggars — not political revolutionaries — were picked up off the street and used as guinea pigs, Stockwell said. When they died, they were thrown back on the streets.

More recently in Grenada, he said, our government kept Grenada's leaders and ministers in packing crates for up to five days in 100-degree weather.

"We were not at war with Grenada," he said. "They had not killed a single American."

Yet the United States practiced torture.

STOCKWELL, WHO served as a case officer in Vietnam and Africa, sees a "creepy" parallel between the U.S. government's involvement in Angola and its involvement in Nicaragua. Similar tactics, boats and planes have been used.

"We talked about mining harbors," he said. "Reagan was more adventurous and actually did it."

But what threat does Nicaragua actually pose to the United States? Stockwell wondered.

"If the issue is communism, will someone explain to me why Reagan is planning a big Hollywood bandstand visit to Communist China" or arranging grain sales to Russia, said Stockwell.

Stockwell believes the CIA should be dismantled, its covert actions halted.

"We are now cycling directly into another war," he said. "Once Reagan is re-elected, we will be in a war, and our young men will be killed."

What's at stake, however, goes beyond young men being killed.

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